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Hilltopics Staff

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INSIDE this issue

Life: A new gym in California tries to attract teens by mixing video games with exercise. Janet Arnold asks whether or not this is really a good idea. Page 2.

Sports: The Stars are finally getting some momentum. The Mavs are looking to be back in form from last year. The Cowboys might be the best team in the NFC. This just might be the best year ever to be a sports fan in Dallas. Sterling Morriss explains on page 3.

Back Page: Todd Baty concludes his series on the ten things to love about SMU. Read his views on SMU's history and future, page 4.

Be Heard: *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions on virtually any topic. Email your ideas, feedback, or articles to hilltopics@hotmail.com.

Owls soar past Ponies, Mustangs see bowl game hopes dashed

by Douglas Hill

A season that had given SMU football fans something to wish for this holiday season ended Saturday leaving Mustangs with little to be thankful for. The Mustangs fell 31-27 to the Rice Owls Saturday at Rice Stadium in Houston. The loss, combined with East Carolina's victory over NC State later that night, officially ended the Ponies' bowl hopes.

The game really came down to key drives. Late in the second quarter, SMU led 21-17. After setting up first and goal from the Rice 1 yard line, the Mustangs failed to put the ball in the end zone and were forced to settle for a field goal. In the third quarter the Mustangs found the game tied at 24 and were driving. They reached first and goal from the 1 again, and again came away with just a field goal. Those two offensive breakdowns, combined with a long field goal miss by Thomas Morstead late in the game, could have been the difference between the Mustangs' first life-after-death-penalty bowl game and another disappointing season.

But unlike some previous seasons, SMU fans have a lot to be happy about this year. For one, we can all be thankful for freshman QB Justin Willis, who had a phenomenal season, putting up some of the best numbers in the region and proving that he can be the quarterback for SMU's near future. He was involved in the running and passing game, and showed the ability to adapt to difficult situations and make important completions.

Student support and interest in the foot-

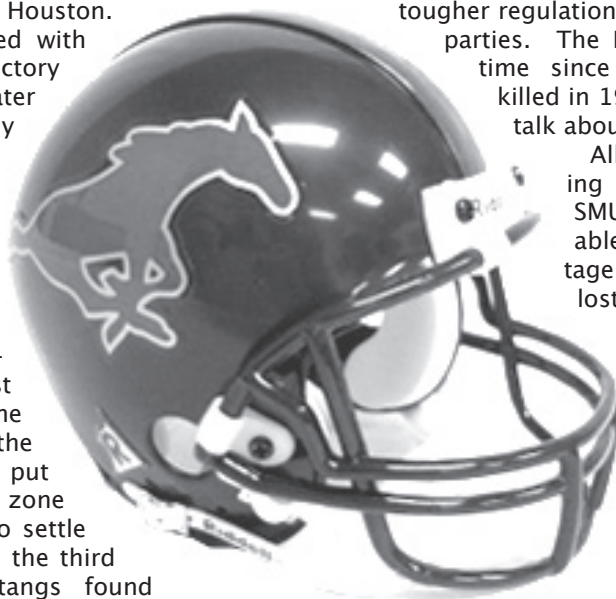
ball program is also finally growing. The student section typically stayed nearly full long into the second half this year, something that only happened once or twice in previous years. The boulevard is booming, despite tougher regulation of booze at tailgate parties. The Hilltop, for the first time since the program was killed in 1987, is buzzing with talk about Mustang football.

All this support is paying off on the field, as SMU enjoyed a noticeable home field advantage. The Ponies only lost one home game, that painful loss to Houston three weeks ago, and they truly looked like a different team on the road than they did at Gerald J. Ford.

Before Coach Bennett took over, there was a lot of hype about his local recruiting ability. As we now watch a young Mustang team dominated by players from Texas, it seems that the hype is finally turning into success.

I've been an SMU football fan for four years now, and it's sad to think that just as I'm leaving campus, the future is starting to look very bright for SMU football. There's no denying that the loss this Saturday to Rice was rough, but Mustang fans should concentrate on how much went well this season and know that it will not be long until SMU is in bowl contention again.

Douglas Hill is a senior international studies major.



We welcome submissions from all members of the SMU community. Letters to the editor should be up to 300 words in response to a previously published article. Contributions should be articles of up to 300-600 words on any topic or in response to another article. Please email your submission to hilltopics@hotmail.com by Wednesday at 7:00 PM to be included in the following week's publication. Special deadlines will be observed for breaking campus events. The opinions expressed in *Hilltopics* are those of the authors solely and do not reflect the beliefs of *Hilltopics* or any other entity. As such, *Hilltopics* does not publish anonymous articles.

Get off the couch and go play your video game: a new approach to working out gains attention

by Janet Arnold

We students at SMU are usually blissfully unaware of Obesity is on the rise, and according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 17% of children and adolescents are over weight. It's a scary statistic considering this age group is traditionally the most active demographic. A new gym, Overtime Fitness, in Mountain View, California—the heart of silicone valley—attempts to find a fun new way of getting youths away from the video game console and... in front of a video game console?

The new gym, only open to children ages 13 to 18, has a unique premise: combining video games and exercise. In addition to its traditional stationary bikes, elliptical machines, and free weights, it has multiple video games that involve an element of physical activity. Youths can step into a virtual boxing game, and a few feet away they can practice with real punching bags. They have familiar games such as In the Groove II, a game similar to its better-known competitor Dance Dance Revolution, and other games that combine standard video games and creative controlling devices that require a physical element.

The gaming element is a relatively small portion of Overtime Fitness, which boasts a rock climbing wall, similar to ours at SMU, and a bevy of equipment to entice children to become more active and to get them to enjoy physical activity. They also boast a computer room so that teens can come after school to finish their homework and then work out, all in one trip.

The creator of the gym uses the concept of games as bait, saying this generation is so visually and technologically stimulated that this concept breaks up the monotony of exercise. They are trying to make working out fun and convenient for kids, making it less intimidating and more welcoming.

I feel that anything that encourages kids to become more active is a positive move, and I agree that anything that gets

these kids off the couch is a good thing. I am just concerned about what we are teaching our generation. When these children become parents that have to get up in the night and change dirty diapers, are we going to turn it into a simulated game where they get points for shooting the used diaper into the trash can?

There is something ethereal about exercising. It clears the mind. When stressed it breaks the tension. It's your time

to clear your head when nothing else can do that for you. I hate the idea of cluttering this time up with mind numbing games. That detracts from the one reason I like exercising.

I hate working out, but at the same time I was the most active kid in America in high school. Why did I wake up at 5:30 six mornings a week one summer to drive 30 minuets to go and be the slowest one swimming in the pool for 2 hours and then go running and suck at that too; only to flow it with another swim practice in the afternoon 3 times a week? Because I signed up with a friend and she couldn't drive herself. So every morning when that alarm went off I thought I can't call Caroline and wake up her whole family at 5:30 just to tell her to find another ride. Guilt made me do it. But I became better for it, and swimming on this highly competitive team one summer became one of the most rewarding things that I've ever done.

There are things in life that just aren't fun to do. But the more you exercise, the better you are at it. Then it's not as hard, and you like the way you feel about yourself for doing it, so you begin to like the activity itself. I think this is an interesting way to get kids exposed to exercise, but I don't feel that it is a way of getting them excited about making the lifelong commitment to a sport or activity.

Janet Arnold is a junior marketing major.



Do you have an opinion about... politics, music, class, television, football, shopping, intramurals, fraternities, movies, tests, the Mavs, sex, restaurants, religion, sororities, driving, study abroad, Umphrey Lee, fashion, news, the war, parking, technology, magazines, bars, baseball, the weather, professors, the Mustang Band, dating, books, nightclubs, Texas, the Daily Campus, pets, club sports, or anything else ?

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Walking the walk and talking the talk: why it's a great day to be a Dallas sports fan

by Sterling Morriss

It never seems as though all of the Dallas professional sports teams can have it together at the same time. If the Mavericks are doing well, then the Cowboys are crappy and the Stars are getting shut out. Or visa versa. Just look at last year – the Mavericks went to the NBA finals, and the Cowboys had another horrible and hopeless season. Here's to not jinxing anything, but for once it seems as if the sports gods have changed their ways and the stars (no pun intended) have aligned over the great city of Dallas. Here are three reasons why it is great to be a Dallas sports fan right now: the Stars, the Mavericks, and the Cowboys.

The Stars are in the midst of an impressive season, coming off of 2 hard-fought wins over the Avalanche and the Kings. The Stars stand at 15 wins and 6 losses for the year, and have scored 30 goals total. After an exciting start to the season, the Stars waned a bit before working together better and finding their groove again. 14 of their 30 total goals were scored in their last 3 games. The new surge to their offense is coming just in time to get ready for playoffs. The Stars are unfortunately in the very tough Pacific division with both San Jose and Anaheim, but with potential All-Stars like Boucher, Modano, Ribeiro and Lehtinen, anything could happen.

The second reason why it is great to be a Dallas sports fan is the Mavericks. After a shaky start to the season with 4 straight losses, the Mavericks have rebounded and at the time of this article have won the next 9, including Friday's emotional win over the San Antonio Spurs and a victory Saturday night that gave the Jazz just their second loss of the year. In an interview Dirk Nowitzki addressed the early losses; he said that he and the rest of the team were still getting used to the newer players added to the roster over the summer. Apparently Dirk is not the type of leader who forces others to adapt to his style of play—he is much more active in learning to change his style to work with others as well. It seems as though the success this year is definitely a team effort. Sure Dirk is averaging over 26 points a game and Jason

Terry is almost at 20 points himself, but it is the mixture of all of the solid perfor-

mances by the Mavs that is creating wins. Avery Johnson has obviously put together a well-oiled team without a lot of the drama that usually accompanies NBA personalities. It is still early in the season, but the Mavericks have the potential to go all the way this year, and that's exciting.

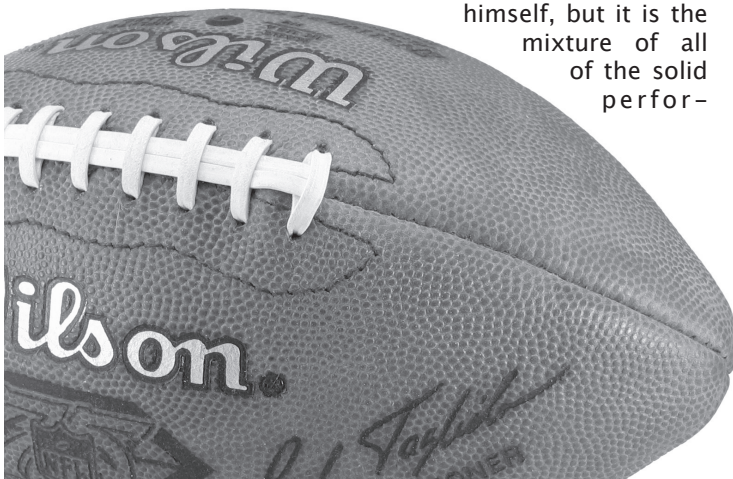
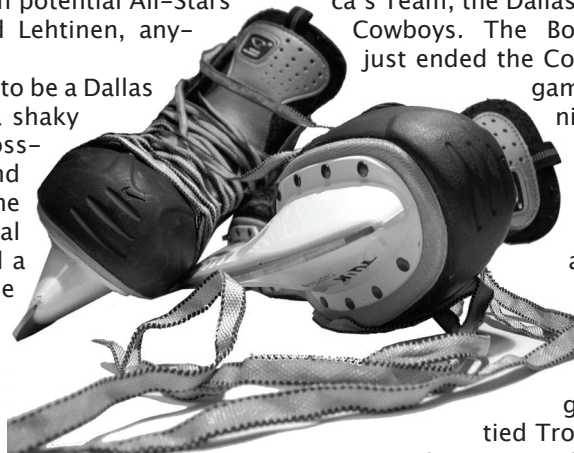
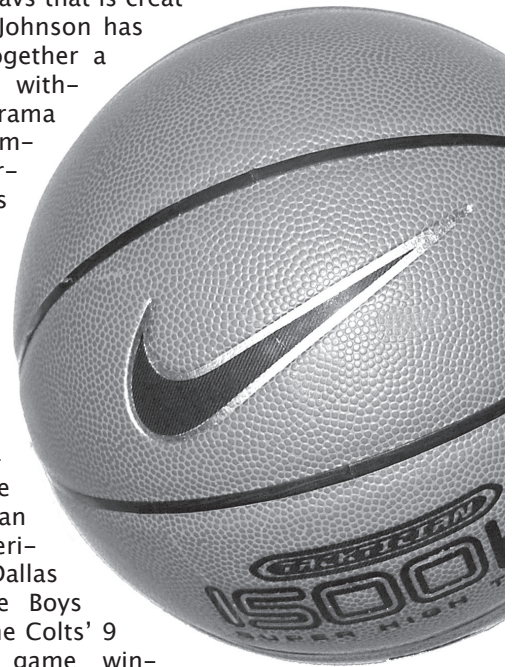
In my opinion, the most exciting reason to be a Dallas sports fan right now is America's Team, the Dallas Cowboys. The Boys just ended the Colts' 9

game winning streak,

and then went on to trample the Buccaneers on Thanksgiving. How? Tony Romo. This young 26 year-old replaced veteran Drew Bledsoe as quarterback at halftime of the October 23 game against the New York Giants. Romo has started ever since, and has won 4 out of his 5 starts, including the huge win over the Colts. On Thanksgiving, Romo threw for 306 yards and tied Troy Aikman's club record for touchdown

passes in a game with 5. He has a ridiculously high quarterback rating, 110.8, and has completed almost 70% of his passes. There's no denying it – Romo rocks. And Romo's not the only exciting thing about the Cowboys; the rushing game has seen impressive statistics from Julius Jones and Marion Barber with 13 touchdowns between them. At the same time, Romo has given new life to the receivers. Terry Glenn and Terrell Owens do not always run the show, because Romo has started involving players like Jason Witten and Patrick Crayton a lot more in the offense. The only question mark on the roster at this moment is kicker Mike Vanderjagt, whose two missed field goals against his former team, the Colts, were out of character. The Cowboys are currently leading the NFC East, on top of the Giants, Eagles and Redskins. Though the Boys have a worse division record (1-3) than the Giants (3-0), ESPN is picking the Cowboys to win the division at the end of the season. This means the Cowboys are most likely headed to the playoffs, and if they keep playing like they are now they will definitely succeed there. The people of Dallas have hope in the Cowboys for the first time since the winning seasons of the 90s. Who knows how far they can go? For Dallas' sake, I hope it's all the way.

Sterling Morriss is a senior art history major



The final installment of the top 10 things I love about SMU: SMU's history and future

#2 SMU's History and #1 the Future of SMU

At any university there is a certain degree of turnover; stOver the past eight weeks, I have shared with you my many reasons for loving our great university, but in classic and cliché fashion, I have saved the best for last. Today, I write about the top two reasons to appreciate this university—its history and its future—and hope that if none of the other articles have gripped your interest, this one does on a most fundamental level. Indeed, I write about that which we all can understand and appreciate: a historical and chronological narrative that every student, professor, administrator, and alumnus is deeply connected to—the past, present, and future of SMU.

However, I often doubt that the average SMU student truly appreciates the precedence of excellence that precedes him or her, and I often wonder if I am the only person to swell with pride when I consider the historical tradition of this university. Am I the only person to get goose-bumps when I speculate as to where Laura Bush's favorite place on campus once was? Or to think about how James Cronin (Nobel Prize winning Physicist) once donned the halls of Fondren Science? Think about how neat it must have been to be Aaron Spelling's (TV producer) roommate on campus, or to talk about sports with Steve Lundquist (Olympic swimmer) and Don Meredith (Dallas Cowboys' quarterback) in the dining hall. This is not to say our history is without blemish; everyone knows SMU's history is anything but ideal. But I am asking you to learn from those that have preceded you—to know both the good and the bad, to emulate the excellent and to learn from the poor. (For further reading, I encourage everyone to read Marshall Terry's brief history of SMU, *From High on the Hilltop: A Brief History of SMU*, which can be purchased in the SMU Bookstore.)

But to fully understand SMU's past it to fully understand

the importance of its future. Today, more than perhaps any other time in this university's history, there is a clear opportunity to do great things and to take SMU to a level of repute and recognition it has never achieved. While the history of SMU is distinguished, it has struggled to rightfully take its place on the international stage as one of the best places to intellectually grow. For too long, we have fought and image of elitism, nepotism, and privileged lifestyle—but today we deserve to be taken seriously. With consistently more competitive incoming classes, and a faculty base that is world renown, it is an exciting time to be an SMU student! Our future is bright and our possibilities after graduation even brighter, thanks to this great university and its ever increasing reputation around the world. But, with such privilege comes an important responsibility: we must recognize and appreciate the previous students that have traversed this campus before us, and commit to fill (if not exceed) their very big "shoes." Now is our time to shine, to develop our minds to be the artists, businessmen, and intellectuals of the future—to continue the tradition of SMU into a new century. Let us understand our past, so that we may have confidence in our future and demonstrate to the world what we are capable of.

Todd Baty is a junior music and history major.



Miss one of the other parts?

You can still check out the last three installments of Todd's "Things I Love About SMU" column online:
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